

# Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam



**By Eric Sinrod,**

Once upon a time, the thought of spam conjured up notions of processed meat in a can. And while such spam still exists and even is to the liking of some people, these days most people associate spam with unsolicited commercial email.

Why? Well, according to the Cisco 2008 Annual Security Report, spam email accounts for nearly 200 billion messages each day, or an astounding 90 percent of email sent worldwide.

Plainly, the enactment of laws such as the Can-Spam Act of 2003 and various State anti-spam laws are not completely solving the spam problem.

It is true that there have been some large judgments against spammers under these laws, however, collecting on those judgments is another matter, especially as it is hard to track down some of the culprits, they may not have the means to pay the judgments, and they may be overseas and beyond the jurisdictional reach of our courts.

Perhaps at least these laws and judgments under these laws may serve as a deterrent for some would-be spammers who ultimately decide not to do the wrong thing.

Speaking of doing the wrong thing, the Cisco report interestingly reveals that the largest source of spam is the United States, with 17.2 percent of spam emanating here. Other large spam contributors are Turkey at 9.2 percent, Russia at 8 percent, Canada at 4.7 percent, Brazil at 4.1 percent, India at 3.5 percent, Poland at 3.4 percent, South Korea at 3.3 percent, and Germany and the United Kingdom each at 2.9 percent.

The Cisco report also notes burgeoning "reputation hijacking" - whereby perpetrators are using real email accounts with sizeable, legitimate Web mail providers to send spam. This reportedly offers increased deliverability as spam becomes more difficult to detect and block.

So, where's the beef (pardon the pun)? Well, treasure your spam in a can, it should only show up when you decide to make a purchase for this product. Spam, email, on the other hand, is not something you choose and not only seems here to stay, but is proliferating.

Spam email certainly can be annoying, can contain offensive content, and can take time to delete. Worse, it can deliver viruses, malware and other horrors that can cause true damage to your computer and data.

Products can be purchased to filter out spam. These products are not perfect, at times filtering out legitimate emails, and at other times not filtering out all spam. This is not a perfect science, but it helps.

And, of course, the legal system can be utilized. But in this context, the laws generally work only as to legitimate businesses that inadvertently make mistakes and run afoul of the anti-spam laws when not having the intent to violate the law. The legal system can be very challenging when dealing with true, professional spammers.

May all your spam be in a can!

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